

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE,

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TC 1700

Sir:

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the listed documents and indicate that they were considered by making appropriate notations on the attached form.

180.00 op

With respect to the foreign language documents, Applicants submit herewith a copy of an office action from the Japanese Patent Office for a related Japanese application in which these foreign language documents were cited, and an English language translation of the Japanese office action. The Japanese office action indicates the degree of relevance of these references found by the Japanese Patent Office.

Additionally, for JP 5-294054 and JP 10-240131, Applicants have enclosed an English language abstract.

This submission does not represent that a search has been made or that no better art exists and does not constitute an admission that the listed documents are material or constitute "prior art." If the Examiner applies the documents as prior art against any claims in the application and Applicants determine that the cited documents do not constitute "prior art" under United States law, Applicants reserve the right to present to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office the relevant facts and law regarding the appropriate status of such documents.

Applicants further reserve the right to take appropriate action to establish the patentability of the disclosed invention over the listed documents, should the documents be applied against the claims of the present application.

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If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Statement, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: February 7, 2003

By: 

Andrew J. Vance
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